

Ruardean Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	115647
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	395765
Inspection dates	10–11 July 2012
Lead inspector	Peter Clifton

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	107
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Caroline Smith
Headteacher	Jane Evans
Date of previous school inspection	14 May 2009
School address	School Road Ruardean GL17 9XQ
Telephone number	01594 542461
Fax number	01594 542461
Email address	admin@ruardean.glous.sch.uk

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Peter Clifton

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Ten lessons were visited and five teachers observed teaching. Meetings were held with staff, members of the governing body and groups of pupils. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at documents including the school improvement plan, the school's information on pupils' progress and samples of pupils' work. The responses to 42 questionnaires from parents and carers, 12 responses from staff and 56 pupil responses were examined and analysed.

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average-size primary school. There are four mixed-age classes across the main school. In addition to this, there is specially-resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs in a communication and interaction centre (CIC), where seven pupils receive support for their severe to profound learning difficulties. These pupils join mainstream classes for some activities. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs outside the CIC is above average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. There is extended provision through an after-school club. The school does not meet the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

The headteacher has been in post since September 2011. There is pre-school provision onsite, which is not managed by the governing body, which was not part of this inspection.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. The school is not yet good because teaching is not consistently good and pupils need more help to develop their speaking and listening skills and the way they interact with each other in lessons. The headteacher, with the strong support of staff, is introducing change which is accelerating pupils' progress. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Standards of attainment are broadly average and achievement is satisfactory. Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and satisfactory progress through the rest of the school. Pupils supported in the communication and interaction centre (CIC) achieve well.
- Teaching is typically satisfactory. Lessons observed during the inspection confirm the school's view that teaching and learning are improving as a result of action taken by the headteacher. Lessons capture the pupils' enthusiasm and pupils comment that they enjoy their work. Learning in lessons usually moves along at a brisk pace, but there are times when it slows. Questioning to develop pupils' understanding is underdeveloped. The use of targets to help pupils assess their own work is a strength.
- Pupils' behavior is satisfactory. Around the school pupils are polite and get on well together, although cooperative and collaborative working is not well established in all classes. Generally, though, pupils' attitudes to learning are satisfactory and pupils feel safe. Attendance is average.
- The headteacher has strengthened the leadership of teaching and the management of performance. Common expectations, for example in lesson planning and marking, are firmly established. Pupils' progress is comprehensively assessed and, over the past year, shows a marked increase in the numbers of pupils who are on track to make expected or better progress. The curriculum is also satisfactory and supports the pupils' spiritual, moral,

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social and cultural development soundly.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Move the quality of teaching from satisfactory to good by:
 - maintaining a brisk pace of learning in lessons
 - developing the use of questioning and discussion in classes in order to promote more in-depth thinking
 - providing more opportunities to develop independent learning through the use of collaborative and extended tasks.
- Provide more help for pupils to establish active speaking and listening in whole-class teaching and through group work so that they become more involved in their own learning.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children start school with skills, knowledge and understanding that are below expectations. They make good progress and typically reach broadly average levels of attainment by the time they go into Year 1. Children in Reception choose different activities confidently and play together harmoniously. More-able children write and read out sentences they have written. For example, they wrote on a 'wanted' poster in the story of Jack and the Beanstalk that 'the giant is fat and scary because he eats juicy children'.

Attainment in reading by the end of Year 2 and by the time pupils leave school is average. More able readers read with fluency and intonation. They retell the key features of stories and explain, for example, what they understand by the 'hairs on the back of your neck stand up'. Pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs apply their knowledge of letters and sounds with determination to read unknown words. In the current Year 6, just over half of the pupils are reading at the higher Level 5. In writing, middle ability pupils in Years 3 and 4 identify how they use connectives, nouns and adjectives to make their openings for an adventure story exciting. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs talk about their ideas for writing and, with the support of an adult, write them down. Older, more able pupils have a good understanding of technical aspects of writing, such as personification. One pupil gave as an example 'the volcano had a tantrum'.

Attainment in mathematics is broadly average. Across the school, pupils' basic calculation skills are secure. Pupils regularly use their mental mathematics skills and are increasingly adept at applying their skills and understanding to solve problems.

A dip in performance in 2011 in Key Stage 2 tests has been firmly addressed. Better teaching is enabling nearly all pupils who fall behind to make up any lost ground.

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The school's tracking shows a strengthening picture of progress over the past year. The progress of different groups of pupils observed during the inspection was never less than satisfactory and sometimes good. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make progress which is similar to the other pupils. In the CIC, pupils make good progress towards their individual objectives, for example in developing number skills and cooperating with each other.

Quality of teaching

Teaching promotes at least satisfactory, and sometimes better, achievement. Over the past year there have been key improvements in how well planning meets the needs of different groups and the use of targets for learning. Relationships in lessons are positive and pupils confirmed that values such as respect and fairness are promoted well. Opportunities for pupils to talk with each other are provided in lessons. However, these are not always effective in helping to develop pupils' thinking. During questioning, opportunities are missed to extend thinking, for example when questions are not probing and too little time is given for pupils to respond.

Planning seen was typically targeted to try to meet the range of needs of pupils in different lessons. Support for pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs ensured that they were able to successfully learn alongside other pupils. In a lesson on graphs in Years 5 and 6, the range of activities was matched well to different abilities. More-able pupils in Year 6 found the work challenging. In Year 2, middle ability pupils doubled two digit numbers confidently, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs made good progress when they counted the spots on the sides of a 'ladybird' to help them calculate. However, there are occasions when learning slows. Examples of these include children having to wait quietly for too long before being given work, activities that are competed too quickly, and group work that is not sufficiently focused.

The use of targets in lessons and through marking is often good. Lessons have clear objectives and 'steps to success' which describe successful learning for different groups. These are referred to regularly. Pupils value marking, particularly in their literacy books. They can point to examples where they have responded to comments made in their next pieces of work.

In the CIC, cooperation and good listening are strongly promoted. For example, when pupils play games together and revise terms such as 'under', 'next to' and 'on', concern for others is a priority. The pupils are supported on an individual basis or in pairs by the teacher, and other adults, who have good skills in managing behaviour.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The engagement of pupils in learning is typically satisfactory. The school has rightly identified the need to help pupils improve their listening skills and become more resilient and confident learners in groups. Some groups of pupils work well together.

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For example, older pupils described how they worked together to solve a tricky problem in mathematics. However, on occasions learning is inhibited, for example, when the pupils do not agree with each other about how to proceed. In whole class sessions most pupils pay attention and listen carefully. A good example of this was when higher attaining pupils in Year 2 listened well to extend their skills when doubling three digit numbers. However, there are a few examples of pupils not paying attention and some calling out. When this occurs, it is managed well by teachers. Pupils in the CIC have a safe space they can use.

Pupils say that the activities they are given are interesting. This reflects success in revisions to the curriculum over the past year. Year 6 pupils, for example, are particularly proud of the 'labyrinths' they have constructed. Those who attend the after-school club say that activities are fun. They enjoy making pizzas and using the school's conservation area.

Around the school, pupils are typically well behaved and friendly. At lunchtimes there is a lot of active play. Pupils say they feel safe in school, a view confirmed by parents and carers. They also consider that bullying is rare and is dealt with effectively should it arise. Pupils know about various types of bullying, including that involving the use of information and communication technology or mobile telephones. They have a secure understanding about the possible dangers of using drugs and alcohol. The questionnaires from parents and carers, pupils and staff provided a generally positive view about behaviour, although some concerns were raised. Additional support provided for families has helped to improve the attendance and progress of some pupils.

Leadership and management

The headteacher has worked swiftly to establish common expectations with regard to the quality of teaching. Strategies used to improve teaching over the past year have been effective. For example, there are now consistent approaches to the use of targets in lessons. Improvement plans are well founded and initiatives to improve writing and mathematics have been successful. Equality of opportunities is only satisfactory because the provision for pupils in Key Stage 2 has not always been as good as in other parts of the school. Nevertheless, the school is successful in ensuring there is no discrimination against individuals or groups. The school's capacity to improve is demonstrated by improvements made in teaching and the impact this has had on progress over the year.

Records tracking progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage are thorough and provide an accurate assessment about the progress being made by the children in different areas of learning. In the CIC, staff have a good understanding of the current attainment of the pupils, but the mapping of progress over time is under developed.

The governing body has helped to ensure that the school promotes distinctive spiritual, moral, cultural and social values. Members of the governing body recognise

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that results in 2011 were not good enough and this prompted a strong challenge to leaders. They have completed a safety audit and arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements, giving no cause for concern.

Pupils are complimentary about changes that have been made to the curriculum over the past year. Different subjects are integrated in topics to make learning more relevant. In the CIC, the curriculum has a strong practical content; pupils are encouraged to sing and think about the effects exercise has on their bodies. Pupils' spirituality is promoted well in assembly through opportunities for prayer. Quiet places and the prayer table provide further opportunities for reflection. While the school promotes an appreciation of local culture, links with others from different ethnic backgrounds are undeveloped.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



12 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ruardean Church of England Primary School, Ruardean GL17 9XQ

Thank you for being so helpful to me when I inspected your school and for your responses to the questionnaire. I talked with many of you, and met with some of you to gather your views. You made it clear that you feel safe and valued, and your parents and carers agree.

Your school provides you with a satisfactory education. Several of you commented that your lessons had improved over the past year and I agree. Your headteacher is doing a number of things which are helping you to learn better. I was impressed with how well you use your 'steps to success' in lessons and with the marking in your literacy and numeracy books. You are also being helped to learn by discussing your ideas with each other and answering questions from your teachers. However, this is an area which could be improved and I have asked the headteacher to help with this.

Although the work you are given is well matched to your individual needs, there are a few occasions when you have to wait for too long before being given work and sometimes activities do not last long enough. I have asked the school to make sure this doesn't happen in the future. Many of you work well together in lessons and this is an important skill which will help you in the future. However, there are some times when group work is not successful and you can help here by listening carefully to each other and your teachers all of the time.

Your behaviour around the school is good and I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Peter Clifton
Lead inspector

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